

WEEKLY SKY REPORT

July 21 – August 3, 2024

CONSTELLATIONS

There's a beautiful selection of constellations and asterisms traipsing across the night sky. As it gets dark you can see just above San Francisco Leo the lion heading to bed for the night. Not too far behind Leo is the star herder Boötes, who looks just like a giant ice cream cone; right at the bottom of the cone is the fourth-brightest star in the sky, Arcturus. This star is about the same mass as our Sun, but it is 25 times its size, which can happen if you are a 7 billion-year-old senior citizen star that has consumed most of its hydrogen. Right next to Boötes is the constellation Corona Borealis, the northern crown, which looks just like a scoop of ice cream fallen off poor Boötes cone. Adjacent to Corona Borealis is the star muscle man Hercules, whose torso looks like a great keystone. About a third of the way down the right side of his torso is the beautiful globular cluster M13, the brightest cluster in the northern hemisphere. You can see this collection of more than 300,000 stars with the binoculars or the telescope that you can borrow from the library (see next page!).

EVENTS

There are some wonderful space-themed events that are happening this summer. The Lawrence Hall of Science has a couple of great planetarium shows: *Traditions of the Summer Sky*; and *Diving into the Blue Planet*. These are 30-minute shows. There is also a program that is described as: "...*Planetarium Pilots*, a self-guided experience where you control the dome and choose where to explore!" Please note: during summer the planetarium can become too hot to host visitors, so call to confirm: 510-642-5132 #0. Lawrence Hall also has amazing 3-D Theater shows: T-Rex, an up-close look at that famous fiercesome critter from the past; and *Wings Over Water*, an amazing look at our feathered friends that uses drones and their like to follow birds through the sky.

Chabot Space & Science Center has their ever popular Friday and Saturday night free telescope viewing, from 7:30pm-10:30pm.

Telescopes @ Berkeley Public Library!

We have 5 Orion StarBlast Astro Reflector Telescopes that you can borrow! Each BPL Branch has a telescope, which may be borrowed for 1 week. Place a hold on it and then pick it up from your branch when it is ready. It is fairly easy to carry at 13 lbs., and stands about 2 feet tall.

Here's what you get:

"A great compact grab-and-go telescope designed for entry-level and intermediate astronomy enthusiasts. Substantial 4.5" aperture and fast f/4 focal ratio provides bright, detailed views of solar system targets like the Moon and planets, as well as wide-field celestial objects like nebulae and star clusters."



Much of the information for this report comes from the wonderful web site, Heavens Above. You can enter your home city location and bookmark it for easy access: <http://www.heavens-above.com>. Other stellar sources include: <http://www.space.com> and <http://www.nasa.gov>. And check spacex.com for launches.

Binoculars @ Berkeley Public Library!

Thanks to a generous donation from the Cal Falcons program, we have 9 Vortex-Raptor binocular kits that you can put on hold and pick up at the location of your choice.

Here's what you get:

Porro prism performance in a mid-size, wide-angle design, the Raptors deliver a bright, crisp image with excellent color fidelity - even in low light conditions. With a wide range of interpupillary distance, they can easily be adjusted to fit anyone in the family, making them ideal for serious, hard-core youth hunters. The kit comes with a copy of The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western America and a pocket guide to local birds of the SF Bay Area. But it is also great for looking at planets, the moon and the stars!



WWW.BERKELEYPUBLICLIBRARY.ORG